



DAVID IRONS

June 2003

Vol. 3, No. 2

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King County Council Committee Work

Growth Management &
Unincorporated Areas

Natural Resources, Parks and
Open Spaces (Vice Chair)

Regional Transit Committee

Regional Water Quality
Committee

Transportation Committee

Regional Committee Memberships

Board of Health

Cedar River Council, co-chair

Central Puget Sound Economic
Development District

Eastside Transportation
Partnership

Growth Management Planning
Council

Puget Sound Regional Council's
Growth Management Policy Board

Dear Community Members,

One of the biggest concerns I hear from constituents is increasing property taxes. I've seen first-hand how escalating taxes are hurting long-time residents and even forcing people to move away. That's why I've made it a top priority this year to improve government efficiency and accountability, and to find innovative opportunities for streamlining operations and saving money.

Last July, I joined Councilmember Kent Pullen in proposing to reduce the number of councilmembers from 13 to 9, as it was 10 years ago before the merger with Metro. My research has concluded that most large counties across the United States operate with fewer elected officials, because in highly urban areas, most government functions are handled by the cities. We can save several million dollars a year by amending our county charter to reduce the number of councilmembers.

In addition, I joined Budget Chair Larry Phillips last December in proposing another charter amendment that would allow the county to engage in biennial budgeting. Using a two-year budget cycle could help the county do strategic long-range planning that would enable more efficient and effective use of resources (time, money and staff). However, the King County Charter, under which we operate, allows only annual budgeting. It would take a charter amendment and a vote of the people to enable us to use this tool.

The need to continue reducing expenses is clear. When the current annual budgeting process begins this fall, King County estimates that it will cost \$24 million more than our taxes will produce to maintain the programs it currently operates into 2004. The County Council will address this shortfall in its budget deliberations in October and November. Last year, the Council was able to find efficiencies in almost all agencies to fill a \$52 million shortfall. We must again trim the County budget by finding additional efficiencies.

I am interested in hearing any ideas you may have for solving the county's budget problems. Many of you have lived in other jurisdictions when the economy experienced a downturn, and you may want to share with me what you liked and didn't like about the government response to economic change. I look forward to hearing your comments.

Sincerely,

King County Councilmember . District 12



Transportation Update

Roads Capital Improvement Program Implementation

2003 is an exciting year for road construction in District 12! I was successful in securing more than \$34 million in funding for our most pressing road infrastructure needs. With that funding we will add needed capacity to our existing roadways, provide new roads to serve our busiest communities, retrofit and replace our seismically vulnerable bridges, provide necessary improvements to busy intersections, improve pedestrian access (especially near schools), continue to reduce roadway impediments to fish passage through culvert replacement and stream restoration, and reduce the drainage impact from roads on our communities. Here are some specific projects that are soon to be or already are under construction:

New Roads

- North Sammamish Plateau Access Road – A new road that will link the I-90 Sunset Interchange with the Issaquah-Fall City Road at Issaquah-Pine Lake Road, opening in August.

Additional Capacity on Existing Roads

- 228th Avenue, SE/NE – Adds 2 lanes from Issaquah Pine Lake Road to Inglewood Hill Road as well as providing a left turn lane and bicycle facilities.
- East Lake Sammamish Parkway between Issaquah-Fall City Road and I-90 provides a southbound HOV lane, and another northbound turn lane onto Issaquah-Fall City Road (already completed).

Bridge Replacements and Retrofits

- Elliott Bridge – Replaces a structurally deficient bridge and approaches as well as improving environmental mitigation along the Cedar River. The project goes out to bid in late 2003 with construction completed in 2004.
- Cedar Mountain Bridge – Replaces a structurally deficient bridge, adds two foot paths and makes improvements to SE Jones Road at SR 169.
- Preston Bridge – Replaces a seismically vulnerable bridge, improves sight distance and removes load limitations.
- Preston Frontage Road Bridge – Retrofits the bridge to decrease the possibility of damage during an earthquake.

Intersection Improvements

- SE Petrovsky Road at 196th Avenue SE – Provides a left turn lane both eastbound and westbound on Petrovsky Road and installs a new signal to accommodate the change.
- Issaquah Pine Lake Road/North Sammamish Plateau Access Road (N. SPAR) at Issaquah-Fall City Road – Replaces existing signal and realigns the intersection to accommodate the new N. SPAR road.
- Black Nugget Road at Issaquah-Fall City Road – Modifies the existing signal to accommodate additional traffic generated by the new N. SPAR road.

Pedestrian Access Projects

- SE 144th Street – This project will provide a walkway for students attending Maywood Middle School.
- 170th Avenue SE – Will provide a wide shoulder for student access to Briarwood Elementary School.
- 177th Avenue SE – Covers a ditch to create a walkway for students attending Maywood Middle School.
- SE Issaquah Fall City Road – Creates a walkway at 252nd Avenue SE for students attending Snoqualmie Springs School.

Fish Passage/Culvert Replacement Projects

- SE 248th Street Culvert Replacement – Removes a barrier to fish passage by replacing an existing culvert with a box culvert and stabilizes downstream banks to reduce sedimentation.
- Kerriston Road at Webster Creek – Replaces two culverts with one larger culvert to allow debris passage.
- Rock Creek Enhancement – Extends an existing road habitat improvement project to include additional fish passage enhancements.

King County road construction in 2003 is addressing our most important traffic problems, improving safety for our children and continuing to address our important environmental responsibilities. I look forward to the completion of these projects and continuing this important work in the future.

Regional Transportation Investment District

Since its inception in 2002, the Regional Transportation Investment District (RTID) has worked diligently to develop a regional transportation package that actually reduces the level of congestion for the Puget Sound region. The RTID recently decided to delay a vote on this package until 2004. I want to take this opportunity to explain the delay and inform you about the type of package we hope to produce.

Recent election results indicate that the public is skeptical of government's ability to complete transportation projects on time and on budget. The RTID is a transportation package like no other. It will be the most accountable transportation initiative this state has ever seen. Not only will RTID be required to perform

yearly audits on all projects, but it also will require a vote of the people if a project goes overbudget by 20 percent. To earn the voters' trust and to ensure that no project goes overbudget, the Legislature has provided the RTID with enough funding to perform an independent review of the projects under consideration. This will ensure that we have the very best cost estimates available when the public decides whether to invest tax dollars in a regional transportation package. However, it has meant a significant delay in putting a package on the ballot.

Another consideration in delaying the vote on the regional transportation package is the desire to have the right mix of projects that truly addresses our

congestion. I believe we must invest in our most pressing needs before we choose to fund our wants. We must fund I-405, the Evergreen Point Floating Bridge, the Alaskan Way Viaduct, SR 509, SR 167 and I-90 before we can consider additional projects. Currently, the King County RTID list envisions Bus Rapid Transit systems on SR 99, SR 522 and I-405 as well as a county-wide traffic signalization program and bus purchases that would allow faster implementation of the Metro Six-Year Plan. The recent decision to delay a vote on RTID will ensure that we can predict costs accurately for the large projects we absolutely must build and allow us to determine which additional multi-modal investments we can afford.

Farm Fresh

One aspect of the Rural Jobs Initiative that I am working on is to keep our farmers working and producing their products. In this region, we have a multitude of farmers producing a wide variety of products for all of us to enjoy. The best way to know you are tasting produce grown, raised or harvested right here in the Puget Sound area is to ask at your market for "Puget Sound Fresh."

The "Puget Sound Fresh" logo means the product you buy is really local.....really fresh. Farmers in Carnation, Fall City, North Bend, Issaquah and all of the surrounding areas are busy growing wonderful-tasting, healthy crops right now. If you drive along any of our rural highways, you'll find active, thriving farms in the heart of the growing season.

Local crops include a variety of lettuces, onions, cabbage, greens, tomatoes, berries, potatoes, squash, eggs, dairy products and lots more.

"Puget Sound Fresh" is a program sponsored by King and Snohomish counties to help you find and enjoy local products when they are in season. You will find "Puget Sound Fresh" products at all of the local farmers markets, in several local grocery stores, including Safeway, Larry's Markets, PCC and Haggen's/Top Foods. Look for the logo.

If you want to receive a periodic listing of what's fresh, just send an email to: Pugetsoundfresh@aol.com. And if you want to know more, to find a specific crop, or directions to the

markets and farms, visit the Web site: www.pugetsoundfresh.org.

When you bite into a local strawberry, sample some fabulous salad mixes, taste our delicious beans, cucumbers and squash, you'll know "Puget Sound Fresh" is the taste for you.

So plan to enjoy the bounty of our region today – and all through the growing season. Ask for "Puget Sound Fresh" at your local market. And have a great meal!



Land Use: Rural Jobs Initiative

Early in my term with the County Council, constituents shared their concerns about the loss of farms, logging-related jobs and small businesses in the rural area. For the last 3-1/2 years, one area of focus for me has been protecting the rural lifestyle and rural economy. A healthy rural area benefits all of us who live in King County.

Currently, I am working with other Councilmembers and Executive staff to evaluate what is needed to help stimulate additional /new jobs while maintaining the jobs already existing in the rural area. This will be part of the focus for the 2004 Comprehensive Plan Update. I have been working with staff, the King County Agriculture Commission and a variety of stakeholders to develop jobs and preserve rural business and agriculture opportunities through stimulating a greater presence of the wine industry in King County.

This follows my work on the 2000 King County Comprehensive Plan Update, when several of my amendments were adopted. Included in these amendments were policies recognizing that the rural area, in accordance with the state Growth Management Act (GMA), is a place where people work, live and play. Traditionally, the jobs in the rural portions of the county focused on the natural resources such as farming, forestry and mining.

Over the years, a number of businesses have developed to support the needs of the rural population. Examples include septic system repair, small logging firms and logging-related repair and crafts and trades businesses.

Recently, the county has experienced the loss of dozens of farms, hundreds of forestry jobs and other small businesses. Some of these losses are related directly to the changing economy in the Puget Sound area, but others are influenced by policy and regulation changes at the county as well as state and federal levels. It is important and economically healthy for the county to provide a variety of jobs in the rural area that fit the skills of our population, reducing the impacts particularly on our transportation and social service systems. Small businesses play an important role in the economy.

Over the last few months, I have worked actively on an ordinance to allow wineries beyond the "small mom and pop-type operations." The ordinance would allow small to medium wineries. In addition, given the on-going agricultural research by Washington State University, it is becoming more feasible than ever to establish vineyards in our agricultural and rural areas. The ordinance has been crafted to ensure compatibility with the rural area and neighbors through the requirement of a conditional use permit and the modification of some standards that were identified in public testimony. The emphasis of the ordinance is to provide rural jobs and preserve agricultural and rural lands for future production to take care of some of the fresh produce and other food needs of our growing population.

2004 Comprehensive Plan Update

The County has begun working on a major update to the Comprehensive Land Use Plan in 2004.

On April 28, the County Council adopted Motion 11697 providing an outline for the scope of work for the 2004 update. Some of you may have attended community meetings in June. If you missed these meetings, additional meetings will be scheduled in October/November and again in January 2004, for you to attend and comment on a draft document.

For more information on the 2004 Comprehensive Plan update and to review the council motion, please visit the DDES website at: <http://www.metrokc.gov/ddes/compplan/2004/index.htm>. The Executive is due to submit the Comprehensive Plan update to the Council on March 1, 2004. During 2004, opportunities for public comment will be available during Council Committee meetings as well as at public hearings before the full Council. Please contact me with any questions you may have regarding this process.

CAO and Stormwater Update

The updates to the Critical Areas Ordinance and the Stormwater Ordinance are moving forward slowly. Staff members have been working since the close of the comment period this past February to review and address the many comments submitted. Currently, we expect a second draft in mid-September 2003. Additional public comment on this draft will be taken before a final draft is completed and submitted to the County Executive for review. The Executive is expected to submit his proposal to the Council by the end of this year. Stay abreast of changes by viewing: <http://www.metrokc.gov/ddes/cao/index.htm>

Environment

Issaquah Creek Basin Report

Agencies, organizations and public officials who have been working to preserve the Issaquah Creek Basin received some good news at a summit meeting this spring. Land acquisition, habitat restoration and volunteer efforts seem to be making a difference.

The Issaquah Creek Basin, which stretches from Lake Sammamish to Taylor and Tiger Mountains, contributes 70 percent of the water that flows into Lake Sammamish. More than 40 percent of the basin is protected in public ownership. As one of the three core areas for wild Chinook salmon production in the greater Lake Washington-Lake Sammamish Watershed, the basin is a high priority for funds for additional land acquisition.

Other county projects involve fencing buffers to keep cows and livestock out of streams, reinforcing eroding banks, planting native riparian vegetation and replacing culverts. The City of Issaquah also has conducted a number of projects in the city.

Water quality in the South Fork (mainstem) of Issaquah Creek has shown some improvements, according to regular monthly testing. Levels of metals are low, compared to most other streams in the Lake Washington Watershed. Phosphorus levels have declined over the last 10 years, which should reduce the severity of toxic algae blooms in Lake

Sammamish. Suspended solids also are low, demonstrating improved erosion control, except for spikes in turbidity levels during storm events. Issaquah Creek still needs improvement, however. More than half the riparian vegetation is non-native, and much of the lower reach has very little in-stream wood or pools needed for salmon habitat.

The East Fork, which follows I-90, and the North Fork, which originates at Yellow Lake on the Sammamish Plateau, have additional problems. The East Fork has the most non-native plants and impervious surfaces, compared to other surveyed creeks in the basin, and the North Fork has problems with high temperatures and low dissolved oxygen levels, which are lethal conditions for fish.

In addition to land acquisition and habitat restoration, public and volunteer efforts in the basin will focus on improving road maintenance practices, reducing the use of aquatic herbicides, enforcement of regulations, protection of groundwater and aquifer recharge areas, and public education about non-point source pollution.

The county has many programs that provide financial and technical assistance to landowners interested in improving the health of their watershed. A comprehensive list of these resources and volunteer opportunities can be found at <http://dnr.metrokc.gov>.

Log Cabin Reach Acquisition

This year, I am proud to announce that I was able to assist in obtaining a funding commitment for King County to acquire 147 acres of salmon habitat, wetlands and mature forests in the Issaquah Creek Basin. The property will be protected forever from development.

In May, the state Salmon Recovery Funding Board awarded a grant of \$708,687 to King County to purchase the eight parcels in the "Log Cabin Reach" of Issaquah Creek's South Fork, in the neighborhood where Issaquah-Hobart Road intersects Highway 18. Last year, I urged the commitment of funding for this acquisition, which includes both sides of Issaquah Creek for a 1.5-mile stretch, including some excellent spawning and rearing habitat with gravel, pools and in-stream wood.

The mature forests and wetlands throughout this reach are essential to the protection of water

quantity, water quality and aquatic habitat for all of Issaquah Creek. The creek supports ESA-listed Chinook salmon, char, sockeye, coho, steelhead, and cutthroat trout. The site also is an important link in the wildlife corridor that incorporates Tiger Mountain State Forest, Squak Mountain State Forest, Taylor Mountain Forest and other protected areas, providing habitat for many species, including: black bears, elk, deer, cougars, bobcats, bald eagles, peregrine falcons, herons, osprey and several amphibians.

The owners of the parcels desire to see it protected, but no longer can afford to hold the property. They worked with King County and the Cascade Land Conservancy, to delay the sale of the property while the county applied for funding. The acquisition should be completed this fall, just in time for the annual return of the spawning salmon.

Recognitions

Hobart Centennial

It is with great pleasure I share with you a milestone in one of the communities in District 12. On May 9, 2003, the community of Hobart celebrated its 100th Anniversary. The community celebrated at the Hobart Post Office. The Post Office offered a special cancellation/postmark to mark the event for 30 days beginning on May 9. To commemorate the occasion my office presented a proclamation signed by the County Councilmembers at the celebration.

The Hobart community began in 1878, when settlers came to the area at the base of Tiger Mountain. As the logging community grew, bringing a sawmill and railroad, community leaders applied

for a post office, which was approved. The post office (zip code 98025) was named after Garret Augustus Hobart, who served as Vice President of the United States under President William McKinley from 1897 to 1899. He died in office in 1899, and Theodore Roosevelt was chosen to replace him on the election ballot of 1900. McKinley was assassinated in 1901 and Roosevelt became President.

It speaks well of the people in the community, when the community continues for several decades through the many economical and societal changes. I wish all the best as the community embarks on the next 100 years.

Tahoma High School recognition

On May 19, I had the honor of recognizing students from Tahoma High School in Maple Valley for earning first place in the State of Washington and first place in the Western Division at the national "We The People" competition in Washington, D.C. The program of the U.S. Department of Education tests student knowledge about civics, government and the Constitution. The Tahoma team, which won the state title for the 10th consecutive year, is led by teacher Stephanie Davis.



Ruth Kees recognition

This spring, I was privileged to have a chance to give a special public recognition to Issaquah resident Ruth Kees in honor of her four decades of work to protect the environment in King County. This 79-year-old activist has worked tirelessly to protect water supply and water quality and to limit development in the Issaquah Creek Basin since she and her husband built their house on Tiger Mountain in 1960. Tributary 0199, which runs through her property, now is called Kees Creek. Councilmember Larry Phillips assisted with the Council recognition on May 5.

65/10 Discount Available on SWM Fees

If you are a residential or a commercial property owner in unincorporated King County, you may be eligible for up to a 50-percent discount in your annual Surface Water Management fee. This is the fee that King County charges commercial and residential properties to pay for surface and storm water facilities, programs and services in unincorporated areas. For residential parcels, the fee is a flat rate of \$102 per year. Commercial parcels are



assessed on an incremental scale based on how much of their parcel is impervious or hard (roofs, driveways, patios, buildings, roads and parking lots for example). To qualify for the 50-percent discount, at least 65 percent of your parcel must be covered with forest or managed as forest under a county-approved forest stewardship plan. In addition, if impervious surface covers more than 10 percent of your parcel, stormwater runoff from that portion of impervious surface in excess of the 10 percent must be fully dispersed

into forested areas or soaked into the ground according to King County standards. Please note that to receive this discount, a "declaration of covenant and grant of easement" giving King County the right of access to your parcel for inspection purposes must be recorded with King County's Office of Records and Elections. If you feel your property might qualify for this discount, call the Water and Land Resources Division at (206) 296-1900 to request an evaluation and on-site visit.

UACs

I would like to thank the many dedicated volunteers who serve on the two Unincorporated Area Councils in District 12. If you live in an unincorporated area and would like to get involved with providing advice and recommendations to the Metropolitan King County Council, please attend your local UAC meeting:

- Four Creeks UAC, meets at 7 p.m. the third Wednesday of each month at the East Renton Community Church. Contact Chair Oscar Bandelin at bandelin@nwlink.com.
- Greater Maple Valley UAC, meets at 7 p.m. the first Monday of each month at King County Police Precinct #3 in Maple Valley. Contact Chair Dick Bonewits at richb2@msn.com.

Email Updates

If you would like to receive regular e-mail updates about upcoming legislation and King County activities in District 12, please call me at (206) 296-1012, or e-mail me at david.irons@metrokc.gov.

On-line Resources

- Parcel Viewer and iMap property information: www.metrokc.gov/gis/mapportal/index.htm
- Property Tax Information: webapp.metrokc.gov/KCTaxinfo
- Transit Trip Planner: tripplanner.metrokc.gov
- King County Comprehensive Plan: www.metrokc.gov/ddes/compplan
- Transportation Concurrency: www.metrokc.gov/kcdot/tp/concurr/conindex.htm



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Information for our community:

- Message from Councilmember Irons
- Land Use Updates
- Transportation Updates
- Contribute your comments

District Days

This year, I am continuing my annual series of community meetings to talk personally with residents of Council District 12, bringing my mobile office to each city in the district for a two-day open house. I would like to invite anyone interested to stop by and give me their personal opinions on local issues, comment on county actions, or get more information. I depend on feedback from residents to help me make the best decisions for our communities.



Either I or my legislative aides will be available each day on a drop-in basis, or call to make a specific appointment. County forms, newsletters, maps, voter registration forms

and other county information will be available at each session. If you cannot make one of those dates, you can contact me by phone or by e-mail at (206) 296-1012 or david.iron@metrokc.gov.

The final District Days event for this year is scheduled:

June 27-28

Maple Valley City Hall
22035 SE Wax Road

Meeting times are at:

- **Fridays** from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.
- **Saturdays** from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.